Irregularities in FCI

1530. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any information about the irregularities in the functioning of FCI in Haryana with regard to wheat sale; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes Sir Information has been received from the Government of Haryana about the irregularities in regard to sale of wheat in Haryana under Open Market Sale Scheme. A case has been registered against the then SRM, FCI, Haryana on 6.1.97 by the Distt. Police authorities at Rohtak. 'The main allegation in the FIR is that illegal gratification was demanded for allotment of wheat under Open Sale Scheme by agents of SRM, FCI, Haryana.

(b) Two FCI officials and three others have been arrested. The FCI officials have been placed under suspension. The services of the then SRM, FCI have been repatriated to his parent cadre. Warrant of arrest against the then SRM, FCI, Haryana has been issued. The matter is under investigation by the State police authorities. The matter has been taken up with CBI also for investigation.

Lifting Restriction on Movement of Foodgrains

1531. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to lift restriction on movement of foodgrains in the country in view of the artificial scarcity of foodgrains created by the traders resulting in rise in prices of foodgrains throughout the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV):(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Faulty Advance Planning in Respect of the Exports and Imports of Wheat

1532. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat India exported during the months from July, 1996 to December, 1996;

(b) the quantity of wheat India imported in the months of January, February and till 10th March, 1997;

(c) the names of countries where wheat was exported and the countries where from it was imported during above period;

(d) the price of exported wheat and the landed price of imported wheat; and

(e) the reasons for faulty advance planning in the matter of vital item like wheat and steps being taken to avoid such situation in future?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) During the period from July, 1996 to Decemer 1996, India exported about 3.45 lakh MT of wheat. The major destinations to which wheat was exported during the above period were Vietnam, Korea, Kuwait, Jordan, Kenya, Bangladesh and YAR. About 5.40 lakh MT of imported wheat has arrived at Indian Ports during January, February and upto 4th March, 1997.

(b) The average price realisation per metric tonne for wheat exports at Indian Ports comes to US$ 182.35 (FOB) approximately. The average C&F cost of imported wheat at Indian Ports comes to US$ 173 per metric tonne.

(c) Import of wheat was necessitated due to fall in production of foodgrains during 1995-96 crop and the consequent shortfall in procurement for the Central Pool.

Hike in Prices of Essential Commodities

1533. SHRI RAM GOPAL YADAV:
SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whetherr Government adhere to the policy of maintaining the prices of essential commodities meant for the common man; and

(b) if so, in what manner the price hike of sugar, wheat and rice is to be explained?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government have taken a number of steps to control the prices of essential commodities. In order to augment the supply of wheat, action has been taken to import wheat upto 2 million tonnes through State Trading Corporation. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential commodities, imports of commodities which are in short supply are encouraged to augment the availability of these items. Some of the commodities are also supplied through the Public Distribution System and Cooperative Stores on below market prices. State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been advised to take stringent action against hoarders and black marketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, etc.

(b) The price rise of essential commodities like sugar, wheat and rice is in tune with the general inflatienary trend prevailing all over the country. Further, decline in production of wheat and increase in the Statutory Minimum Prices of these commodities, alongwith the hike in petroleum products, can be attributed to the increase in the prices of these commodities.

Procured Wheat Lying Open in Punjab

1534. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the last rabi crop a large quantity of procured wheat has been lying in the open, particularly in Punjab, due to lack of adquate warehousing capacity;

(b) whether Government have made adequate arrangements for the proper storage of wheat after the coming rabi crop season; and

(c) if so, the broad details thereof and in case adequate arrangements have not been made for the purpose, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

Encouraging new Sugar Units, A Food Disaster

1535. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 27th January, 1997, under the caption 'encouraging new sugar units is inviting a food disaster';

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government in regard thereto;

(c) whether Government are aware that due to large scale diversion of the